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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 07, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 07, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

**BOLGE / EKSPRES:** Turkish American Association in Adana implemented new security measures and installed four surveillance cameras on its premise following a bomb attack carried out on the association's building on January 30 (see press summaries 01/31 and 02/03).

**RADIKAL:** Officers from the Diyarbakir's Security Directorate issued a warning for bishops and priests in the province to be more cautious following the incident in which a Catholic priest in Trabzon was killed. Diyarbakir police members paid a visit to the Syriac Orthodox Church in Alipasa quarter to urge the church members to be more cautious and to ask whether they needed anything in terms of security concerns.

**BOLGE:** Party grassroots in Adana's AK Party Yuregir headquarters, who are reportedly disturbed about re-election of Bilal Nadir Gok as Yuregir District AKP Chairperson, conveyed their frustration about this development to the AKP national headquarters. Bilal Nadir Gok is reportedly showed nepotism and favoritism toward members of a religious sect during the selection of the administrative board members.

**HURRIYET:** A 26-year-old female member of the terrorist organization PKK, who had to join PKK as a result of her kidnapping by PKK members in 1993 from a village in Igdir when she was 13 years old, escaped from the organization when she was convinced by Igdir Jandarma Intelligence team members as they chatted with her through the internet.

**HURRIYET:** Security officers, barely noticing a bomb which was planted on a road between Tunceli and its Hozat district, immediately took security precautions and safely rendered the bomb ineffective.

**CUMHURİYET / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM:** Van Centennial University Rector Yucel Askin, who paid visits to some party leaders and representatives in Ankara, when asked by journalists whether he would enter political life, said he had a 15-month tenure ahead of him that he would complete as the rector of the university, and he would consider then whether he would engage himself in politics or not.

**SABAH / OZGUR GUNDEM:** Ozgur Gundem and Sabah dailies reported that two non-commissioned officers who were arrested on November 29, 2005 as they were held as defendants in the November 9 Semdinli case, were indeed rewarded with a certificates of merit by the Hakkari Provincial Jandarma Command on November 22, 2005. Ozgur Gundem further reported that, Ahmet Ersin, CHP member of the Turkish Parliamentary Commission Probing Semdinli Case (TPCPS), said the reward might have been made to influence the judiciary. Esat Canan, CHP member of TPCPS, said that the act to grant certificates to the officers aimed to provide patronage to the officers. Separately, following Abdullah Ocalan's weekend remarks made to his attorneys, who said that Ocalan would order all the PKK militants to lay down arms should the government 1- remove all obstacles that have been preventing Kurdish people from enjoying their cultural rights, 2- protect these rights in the constitution, 3-issue a general amnesty for all the militants, Esat Canan said he was supporting the suggestion to issue a general amnesty.

**EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM:** Due to snowed-in closed roads in Bitlis's Hizan district, a 70 person team carried a pregnant woman for eight hours along the 30 kilometer road to be able to bring her to the hospital in Tatvan's state hospital in Bitlis. The women gave birth to a boy; however, the health condition of the women is reportedly still under risk.

**OZGUR GUNDEM:** A WHO (World Health Organization) delegation has been in Iraq for one week to conduct studies on the bird flu outbreak in Baghdat and Suleymaniye. One person's death was confirmed as from bird flu in Iraq. The delegation said that seven patients were suspected as having bird flu and samples taken from them have been sent to a laboratory in Cairo Egypt.

**CUMHURİYET / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM:** Following a January 24-dated letter from the Prosecutor's Office of the Supreme Court to DTP (Democratic Society Party) to drop the membership

of 74 founding members of DTP (see press summary 01/31), DTP Central Executive Board announced that it had to drop these memberships. DTP further announced that the decision of the Prosecutor's Office was an undemocratic one and DTP would continue to struggle in the legal arena for annulment of this decision.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Adana Security Directorate members, who conducted an unannounced raid on the provincial party building of DTP in Adana, detained 9 persons and seized more than 70 photographs in the building.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Turkish Armed Forces started a military operation in the Uludere district of Sirnak. The operation has reportedly been assisted by the military personnel from Senoba Jandarma Command, village guards and military aircrafts.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The hunger strike that was started in Mahmur refugee camp in Iraq which lasted for four days has reportedly been ended (see press summary 02/03). Meanwhile, 10 members of the Democratic People's Initiative in Adana's Misis quarter, launched a two-day rolling hunger strike to protest government's policies that reportedly aimed to isolate Ocalan in his prison cell.

RADIKAL / SABAH / EVRENSEL: Members of the Free Women's Initiative in Batman marched to protest the increase in incidents of women's suicide in Batman recently.

SABAH: Two Jandarma privates in separate Jandarma Commands in Sirnak committed suicide.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

BOLGE: GAP (Southeastern Anatolia Project) Administration Regional Development Director announced that 15 billion dollars are needed for the GAP project to be completed in 2010. 17 billion dollars have been spent to date for the 32-billion dollar project and financial resources other than the public budget are needed to complete the project on time.

12. CUMHURİYET / HURRIYET / BOLGE / EKSPRES / RADIKAL: State-owned Tekel Cigarette Company has completed a production planning process to achieve standardization of the cigarettes it produced. Tekel will now consider strategic proximity of its factories to the markets in its rearrangement of production in its factories. Tekel has already determined which factories will be producing its highest-demand brands.

13. BOLGE / EKSPRES: John Hendrix, a Dutch agricultural advisor, who has been providing consultancy services about fruit and fruit sapling production for Turkish farmers since 1998, met with people engaged in this business in Adana's Yumurtalik district. Hendrix reportedly said that the cost of inputs in fruit production surged greatly; therefore, farmers should consider measures to prevent further rising costs.

14. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): State Minister Kusat Tuzmen said that Gaziantep's export capabilities and Gaziantep's premises have been giving hope to them (government). This was because Gaziantep has reached a 40 percent exporting figure while the average exports figure in Turkey was 17 per cent.

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